# FAITH AS RELATED TO HEALTH

WILLIAM E. BARTON

THE DAY'S WORK SERIES

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# FAITH AS RELATED TO HEALTH

My son, in thy sickness be not negligent;
But pray unto the Lord, and He shall heal thee.
Put away wrong doing, and order thine hands aright,
And cleanse thy heart from all manner of sin.
Then give place to the physician, for verily the Lord hath created him;
And let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.
There is a time when in their very hands is the issue for good,
For they also shall beseech the Lord
That He may prosper them in giving relief and in healing for the maintenance of life.

*Ecclesiasticus, xxxviii. 9–15.*

The Day's Work Series

# FAITH AS RELATED TO HEALTH

BY

WILLIAM E. BARTON, D. D.

Author of "The Psalms and Their Story," "A Hero in Homespun," "Pine Knot," "The Improvement of Perfection," etc.

BOSTON

L. C. PAGE & COMPANY

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# PREFACE.

## THE REASON FOR THIS LITTLE BOOK.

Not long since I preached a sermon on "The Healing Christ," in which I had occasion to speak somewhat at length of those alleged works of healing which, under various names, now claim the right to be known as distinctively Christian. Certain people who heard the sermon asked for its publication, and I consented. The sermon, however, was one of a series extending from Christmas to Easter, and considering in chronological order the more important events and aspects of the Life of Christ. The portion which fitted it in its place in the series unfitted it for separate publication, and the part for which its publication was requested came in for discussion somewhat incidentally. In preparing the manuscript for the press, therefore, I shaped it anew as a discussion of faith-healing in its various forms.

As thus printed for local circulation, the pamphlet elicited a prompt demand, growing out of general interest in the subject. The thousand copies were quickly gone, and requests were received for more. I have taken occasion to enlarge the booklet in preparing the present edition, and to change the order of

some of the matter, but have omitted nothing of consequence from the former edition.

This discussion is not intended to provoke controversy, nor to deal uncharitably with the beliefs or practices of any group of Christians. It attempts a brief, and the author hopes a sensible and candid, discussion of Christ's miracles of healing, and of some of the various modern schools of mental cure.

*First Church Study, Oak Park, Illinois.*

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# FAITH AS RELATED TO HEALTH.

## I. The Spirit of This Inquiry.

The past few years have witnessed the rise of several organisations which seek for bodily healing through religious devotion. Opinions differ widely as to the value of these several systems of faith-cure or mind-cure, and many honest people are in doubt. Any subject concerning which so much of controversy exists calls for our most candid investigation; and any so closely related to the deep tragedies of life calls for our most sympathetic criticism. In such a spirit of candour and of sympathy I would begin this very brief discussion.

Who is there that does not sympathise with the quest of the afflicted for relief from physical suffering? To the young Buddha, the burden of the world's pain became so great that he gave his life to its relief. To the Christ, the sigh of the sorrowful, the moan of the sick, came ever as an appeal to the Divine sympathy. It is little wonder that systems not a few should have grown up in our own day in which faith in bodily healing is a cardinal principle.

I do not wish to speak of these systems with any lack of Christian charity. In the presence of pain and fear and anxiety and death, I would speak with all tenderness. I have only kind words for those whose sickness has driven them to the use of unusual means in hope of relief. Whether it be relief that is found at the shrine of a dead saint with the pile of disused crutches before it, or the wholeness that follows a Protestant's anointing and prayer, or the benefit derived from purely mental treatment, if there be evidence of real healing, that fact at least challenges respect in proportion to the reality of the cures alleged, and the sincerity of those who procure or experience them. All these systems must be judged, however, by reason, and not alone by sympathy. They stand or fall by certain tests to which all must submit. Their points in common must be determined, their differences discovered, and their relation to the miracles of Scripture and to psychological laws made clear. The assumption of any system that it is superior to these tests would be *prima facie* evidence that it is not genuine. By the principles of simple common sense, truth must be established, and error disclosed.

## II. The Natural and the Supernatural.

It is not well for us to discredit all unusual exhibitions of healing power because they seem to involve the supernatural. There are more things in heaven and earth than are understood in our philosophy. Many things are certainly true which we do not understand. The line between the natural and the supernatural is the horizon line of man's discovery; all things are equally natural and none are supernatural to God. Man himself is a supernatural being, partaking of the life and power of God. Let him not too readily discredit the powers which are yet above him, nor deny facts because their causes are at present inscrutable.

On the other hand, there is no presumption in favour of the supernatural. There are some minds so constructed that the very claim of the supernatural seems to involve a certain sacredness, and a presumption in its favour. But the Bible uses the supernatural sparingly, and in general makes plain the relation of cause and effect. We shall find, when we come to study the method of Jesus, that the love of the supernatural has its dangers; it is well to remind ourselves at the outset that no alleged miracle at the present day can claim for itself any sanctity or escape any element of reasonable scrutiny because of its alleged miraculous character.

In some heathen countries even the record of Bible miracles tends rather to hinder than to help in the conversion of the heathen. Our missionaries find themselves quite unable to use them in their familiar place among the evidences of Christianity. The noble Brainerd, in his narrative of work among the American Indians, wrote:

"When I have instructed them respecting the miracles wrought by Christ in healing the sick, etc., and mentioned them as evidences of His divine mission, they have quickly referred to the wonders wrought of that kind which one of their own diviners had performed by his magic charms, whence they had a high opinion of him and of his superstitious notions, which seemed to be a fatal obstruction to some of them in the way of their receiving the gospel."

Doctor Buckley reminds us that this same diviner was converted under the preaching of Brainerd, being influenced by the truth which he taught and the holy life which he lived.[1] To these tests must be the final appeal. In countries where the miraculous is associated so hopelessly with superstition that its use, if available, could only hinder the progress of truth, medical missions, healing in the name of the Lord, are spreading the gospel, both in its essence and in its spirit.

The final test of truth can never be the apparent attestation of what appears to be the supernatural. The last appeal is ever to the reason and the conscience

[1] "Faith Healing, Christian Science, and Kindred Phenomena," by J. M. Buckley, p. 47.

of men. Far back in the Old Testament times men were warned against following a new religion simply because it was accompanied by signs and wonders:

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him." (Deut. xiii. 1–4.)

If we were for ever committing our faith to that which comes to us with an air of mystery, we should have before us a perpetual phantom chase. Even though signs and wonders are shown, even though prophecies are made and fulfilled, the final test is the value of the revelation to the lives of men. If a man is tied with ropes and shut into a cabinet and the lights are turned down, and strange things occur, the final question is not whether I can explain his loosening of the knots, but whether the revelation made in the dark is of real value to the assembled audience. If a pencil is put within a folded slate, and, later, writing is found within, the final question is not whether I can explain the means by which the writing has been accomplished, but whether the alleged revelation has really added to the sum of human knowledge. If a man establishes a new religion and works cures, it is not necessary

to prove that all who are alleged to have been helped by him grow sick again, but only to inquire whether any new principle has been discovered which makes for the permanent advantage of men and women. Between the false and the true, the pretender and the real bearer of a message from God, we must discern, not by a comparison of wonders which make the curious gaze, but by evidences of sincerity, unselfishness, and goodness. The working of cures can never attest as divine an alleged revelation accompanied by vulgarity, cupidity, and pretence.

Besides being a most uncertain proof of the divinity of the faith which it proclaims, the supernatural, so called, has other serious disadvantages. It tends to disturb faith in the goodness of the established order of things. It sets us to looking for God in His unusual manifestations, and to ignoring an "earth crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God." It discounts God's habitual methods, and enhances unduly those which are exceptional. It tends to divert men's minds from the real essence of the divine revelation, and to fix their attention upon the accessories thereof. It creates a morbid craving for more of the mysterious, and so for ever stimulates what it cannot satisfy, an appetite for the marvellous and the abnormal. It creates new and false tests of truth, and refuses to accept truth except as it becomes more or less mysterious and unnatural. It sets a wicked and adulterous generation to seeking signs and wonders, which seeking they substitute for a search after righteousness.

## III. Christ's Miracles of Healing.

Jesus had no fondness for being known merely as a worker of miracles. He preferred to attest His power and truth by moral and spiritual evidences rather than by those which bred in the people a desire for the unusual. That such a desire speedily grows abnormal, He well knew, and to that fact His experience adds new evidence. More than once He manifested great reluctance to work miracles, and repeatedly He forbade the knowledge that He had done so to be published. Jesus wanted men to believe the truth because of its self-evidencing power; miracles, largely, had power over those minds that were incapable of higher spiritual discernment. "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me," He said; and then, lest this should be too much for them, He added, "Or else believe Me for the very works' sake." The supernatural was the resort of every charlatan and fraud; Jesus made His appeal to the heart and conscience. Jesus was reluctant to have men think it their duty to believe because of His power to reward or punish them; He would have them believe because of their love of truth and goodness. He shrank from seeming to bribe them to be good by means of his miracles, and preferred that men should hear His truth, and see His life, and believe in God who had sent Him.

"Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe," said Jesus, reproachfully. What was even worse, they would not believe after they had seen them, as He Himself knew. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead." The miraculous as a means of conversion was a conspicuous failure in Christ's day. He did not rely upon it. He rebuked the craving for it. He taught men to believe in truth and goodness, and not to demand those exhibitions which in false teachers so readily become mere feats of fortune-telling and legerdemain. It is better for a man to believe through a miracle than not to believe at all; but "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." Blessed are those to whom God is real, not in the unusual only, but in all the normal exhibitions of His righteous and inviolable laws.

I have great patience with men who find it difficult to believe in miracles. In so far as Christianity has miracles, they are a means to an end, which end is faith in Christ. If that end be attained without them, the miracles need impose no added burden. The moment they impede faith, they may be allowed to stand aside for the help of those to whom they are of real assistance, while those souls that do not find help in them find God through such agencies as He uses for their assistance and enlightenment. The man who derives no help from miracles will not, if he is wise, deny them; to other souls they have their meaning. But he need not wait to find God through the means which Christ

counted of lesser importance, if God has made Himself plain through means that appeal to him as more truly spiritual.

Men often use their belief in miracles unwarrantably; first attempting to prove the miracles by revelation, and then to support their belief in the revelation by the miracle. This must not be. A man cannot say, "I believe the Bible because its writers wrought miracles to prove their divine authority, and I believe in miracles because the Bible records them." He must choose whether his faith in the miracles shall rest on the Bible, or his faith in the Bible shall rest upon miracles, — he cannot elect both without leaving both without foundation. Whichever he chooses to believe, it will be better in the long run for his faith, if he accepts as final no proof of a revelation that in the last analysis is not moral. Prophecies fail, tongues cease, and the argument from miracles changes; but faith and love and hope abide, and that religion is most truly from God, which gives most of the things that last.

Miracles have still their evidential value to us, and to the greatest of them, the resurrection of Christ, Christianity itself affords nineteen centuries of unbroken testimony. This is the only miracle which the modern Christian need trouble himself to prove. So far as the others are important, they follow readily from this. Some miracles were less important than others when they were wrought, and some had a greater impressiveness and value to their own age than they can possibly have to a later time. He who believes that Jesus Christ

rose again from the dead, and that He lives still in the life of heaven and of the world, need not trouble himself because some of the other miracles give him difficulty. Nevertheless, one has only to compare the miracles recorded of Christ with the apocryphal miracles and the alleged miracles of other religions, to be struck at once with the contrast. The miracles of Christ form a cycle attesting His power over natural and spiritual forces. They are full of dignity and majesty and strength. They appeal not to men's love of the marvellous, but to their spiritual nature. They exhibit a sympathy and a self-control which are the perfection of the human and the Divine. They are free from all ostentation and pretence. They are free from all timidity on the one hand, and from all striving after effect on the other. They are free from all appeal to superstition and from self-advertising. They are free from all grotesqueness and from all pandering to vulgar curiosity. They are full of a grace which belongs to no other prophet or religious teacher. They are full of a conscious power which never shrank from the extremity of human need, and never exceeded by any effort at display the occasion which evoked them. They are simple, beautiful, and convincing. They were done in the daylight. Their motive was transparent, and their result was immediate and easily tangible to the senses. They are ever for moral or spiritual ends, and exhibit beautifully and helpfully the power of God in its various moral relations. They are appropriate, masterful, and worthy of the Son of God.

It is the regular method of the impostor to make his claim at the outset, and work his wonders to prove it. Christ wrought very differently. There are but two recorded miracles in the first year of His ministry, and one of these is near the end of it.[1] It was distasteful to Him to make the power of God a thing to be exhibited, chased after, stared at, and gossiped about. The temptation to use miracles for the display of his power, He met and conquered in the wilderness. He did not begin His work with a claim to be the Messiah, and proceed to establish that claim by the exhibition of superhuman strength. He began by preaching the good tidings of the approach of the kingdom of God, veiling His power, keeping it in the background, using it sparingly, often reluctantly, and only when there was special occasion.

Still, He who claimed to be the Son of God must give reasonable evidence, not only of goodness, but of power, and of that power manifest for moral ends. So Jesus wrought from time to time such works as were necessary to impress His own age with a conviction that He had come from God. He proved that He had power over nature, power over sickness and sin and all the forces of evil, and power over the hearts and lives of men. Largely, His miracles were works of healing,

[1] Jesus was probably baptised in January, A. D. 27, and wrought His first miracle at Cana near the end of March in that year, returning to Jerusalem for the Passover, April 11–17. It was probably in January, A. D. 28, that He healed the nobleman's son, His second recorded miracle. (John ii. 1–10; iv. 46–54.)

for of such there was pressing need. It may be that a mere arithmetical comparison does not give us in right proportion His own thought of the legitimate objects for display of Divine power. It may be that He would have preferred a larger proportion of other manifestations of the Divine nature. He could not escape from men's infirmities, and so He healed and comforted. But His first miracle was wrought to add to human pleasure;[1] the one miracle recorded by all four evangelists was not of healing but of feeding;[2] the miracle by which He brought His disciples to Him, and by which He defined their future work as His followers, was to profit them in their regular method of getting a living;[3] and the only one by which in part He sought to help Himself was wrought to pay the tax collector.[4] God's power is for life's normal functions, and not wholly for its remedial necessities.

It is entirely possible, therefore, that our study of Christ's miracles has led us to think too much, relatively, of those of healing, because of their mere numerical preponderance. We may err in supposing God's work to be remedial rather than constructive. It may be that in God's thought the remedial is the incidental, and constructive is the essential, in the mission of Christ. It may well be that the mission of Christ to men concerns, more definitely than we sometimes think, their accustomed vocations, their daily problems, and even their normal recreations and pleasures.

[1] John ii. 1–11. [2] Matt. xiv. 19–20; Mark vi. 35–44; Luke ix. 12–17; John vi. 5–13. [3] Luke v. 1–11. [4] Matt. xvii. 24–27.

But Christ was constantly pressed upon by the world's necessities. The unending groan of pain, that from the dawn of history has been wrung from the heart of this sad earth, smote ever on His sympathetic ear. What works He might have wrought in a world with less stern necessities, we may perhaps debate, but it was a world of pain and sorrow, a world with little skill in healing, a world with great ignorance of the laws of health, into which He came. He went about doing good, and He did the good that was most needed, whether its specific form best represented His mission or not. When the leper cried, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," He did not stop to ask whether He was healing lepers out of proportion to their number, — He healed the man before Him. So, teaching and healing, He lived His wonderful life. Men's bodily needs and men's spiritual needs, He met them both. Upon His own loving, generous heart He took the burden of the world's sickness and sin. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."

## IV. Various Modern Systems.

It has been my good fortune to see something of mental healing in its various forms. In seven years' residence in the South, I saw something of attempts at cure by incantations, charms, and the various superstitious practices of witch-doctors. If the cures following these processes are to be explained wholly as coincidences, the explanation must be stretched to cover a somewhat wide variety and number of cases.

While in the mountains of Kentucky, I attended some of the tent meetings of Rev. George O. Barnes, and saw him anoint scores, probably hundreds, of people for bodily healing. The sick were brought from miles around. I saw men come in lame, and walk out without limping. I heard the testimony of deaf men who were wakened next morning by the crowing of the fowls.

I had some opportunity of seeing the work of Mormon missionaries, and of hearing of the cures which they were said to perform. Later, I had occasion to attend certain gatherings of Spiritualists, and have witnessed there some similar phenomena. During a half-dozen years in Boston, I saw much of the Christian Scientists, and knew many excellent people among them. After Mrs. Eddy ceased as pastor of the First Christian Science Church, her successor, at a time

when Christian Science churches had pastors, was a former pastor of my own, and a man of undoubted character. From time to time I had quite sufficient opportunity of learning of the principles and the alleged cures of Christian Scientists.

Christian Science has had and is having a large following. Philosophically it is a heresy whose hope is in the fact that its error is largely self-limiting; but its success has been great because it tells one needed truth. We ought to learn to talk and think, not of whatsoever things give us headache or backache, and of our symptoms favourable and the reverse. We ought not to pollute the sunlight with our complaints and our whimperings, but rather think of the things that are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report. And this will affect not our minds only but our bodies. That is a truth which is both Christian and scientific. Christian Science is not at all inconsistent with Christian character, and those who hold it in a Christian spirit ought to be considered and treated as Christian brethren. As a system, however, it deserves just so much of consideration as it evidences of solid truth. It cannot stand permanently, but will pass away, as did the Gnosticism whose error it has revived in its impossible denial of matter.

Christian Science, so called, is a religion, a system of philosophy, and a method of mental therapeutics. As a religion we do not know what it is to be, and cannot determine until after the death of Mrs. Eddy, whose decease will affect it in one of two ways, and probably

will enlarge considerably its system of doctrine. As a philosophy it is open to investigation, and capable of intelligent discussion by any one who can follow Mrs. Eddy's somewhat remarkable logic; if the task weary him, he can neither stand nor sit, for there is supposed to be no matter for him to rest upon, nor will the premises of the system afford him much more substantial ground. As a system of mental therapeutics it deserves respect in proportion to the reality of its cures, which are much like the cures of other mental systems, both in the kind wrought and those which it is unable to perform.

Mrs. Eddy has recently settled a vexed question for her followers, and settled it shrewdly and wisely.

"Rather than quarrel over vaccination, I recommend that, if the law deemed an individual to submit to this process, he obey the law, and then appeal to the gospel to save him from bad physical results. . . . We may safely submit to the providence of God, to common justice, to the maintenance of individual rights, and to governmental usages. This statement should be so interpreted as to apply, on the basis of Christian Science, to the reporting of a contagious case to the proper authorities when the law so requires." (*Christian Science Journal*, April, 1901.)

This is a very wise move, and will relieve a good many healers from a dilemma. Nor can it be called inconsistent; for if Christian Science can save a man from smallpox, surely it can save him from vaccination. Moreover, it will always now be uncertain how much good or harm he gets from each; if the case goes well, it will be presumably because Christian Science has

saved him from the logical bad effects of vaccination; if it goes ill, it is probably because Christian Science was interfered with. But, if there is no disease, no pain, no matter, how is a healer ever to know what to report? And is he to admit that a man has diphtheria, scarlet fever or mumps, when there is and can be no such thing? This will surely be a difficulty, but, nevertheless, Mrs. Eddy has done a wise thing, and one that will enable Christian Science to get all the credit justly due it, even in cases where the misguided suppose that vaccination has done its part of good.

Something of what Christian Science can and cannot do may be illustrated by the following incident from a Boston "healer," published in the *Christian Science Journal* for Dec. 27, 1900:

"About eight years ago I was called to a country town in Missouri to attend the case of a small child. One morning, when taking a stroll over the farm with the owner, a revolver was prematurely discharged when taking it out of my pocket. I felt a queer sensation in my thigh, but denied it at once and repeated the Scientific Statement of Being. Upon examination, it was found that the ball had entered the thigh, but had not passed entirely through, lodging about half an inch from the other side. I asked the friend with whom I was staying to cut the ball out, but could not persuade him to do it. He said he knew of an old army surgeon, some five miles from there, and if I could stand it to ride that distance he would at once hitch up and take me. I replied that I could stand it, as I was feeling all right. On the way over I was often asked if it hurt much, and as I always replied in the negative my friend would say, 'That is funny.' Finally we arrived and had the surgeon extract the ball. After cutting it out he remarked, 'What are you made of? You did not make a groan, and the flesh didn't even quiver when the knife

was used. I cannot understand it.' I looked at him a moment and smiled. He said, 'You had better come back to-morrow and let me dress the wound.' I said, 'Thank you; but I will take care of that all right.' While paying him, he remarked, 'You puzzle me, but I believe you must be one of those Christian Scientists that are going the rounds here and curing people.' I replied that I was. I rode over the rough roads back to the farm, feeling no discomfort whatever. I attended to all my duties and felt no pain. In three days all was as if the accident had never occurred, and has remained so to this day. Surely Truth and Love are our only support."

This is a case that lends itself very well to such criticism as sympathy forbids in many of the published statements. Where people have suffered long and have found any measure of relief through Christian Science, it is an ungracious task to inquire whether they are really as much better as they believe, and whether a like benefit might have come in another way. But this is the case of a professional healer, and his cure suggests on the surface that, the ball being removed, he had a good recovery, such as another man with equally good health and nerves might have had from a flesh wound no more serious. The "Scientific Statement of Being" which he repeated would seem to be the proper thing to use for such a case. It has since been ordered as a uniform part of the worship of Christian Science churches, by Mrs. Eddy's request, in the April, 1901, number of the *Christian Science Journal*. "From this date," she says, "all the Churches of Christ Scientists are requested to read at the close of service, and before benediction," together with "the correlative

Scripture according to 1 John 3 : 1, 2, 3," the following declaration of faith :

" There is no life, intelligence, or substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All in all. Spirit is immortal Truth ; matter is mortal error. Spirit is the real and eternal ; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness ; hence, man is spiritual and not material."

If man is spiritual and not material, out of what did the old army surgeon cut the bullet — out of Infinite Mind ? If it was possible to overcome the pain of the bullet-wound by denying it, why was it not possible to overcome the matter in the bullet by denying it ? With what did immaterial mind shoot itself, if "there is no substance in matter ?" Why should a healer, who knows that there is no substance in matter, need or desire to shoot anything but Mind out of the muzzle of a revolver ? And, being himself shot by a "mortal error," falsely represented to the senses as a bullet, why did he not treat himself wholly by Christian Science ? Why not take two X-ray photographs, one showing where the bullet is during the prevalence of the "error," and the other, three days later, showing how, without surgery, the bullet has been changed to Truth or Mind ? It is thus that Christian Science trips glibly over trivial little inconsistencies. Its dentists still apply Christian Science to their work, but fill teeth with error, alias gold and amalgam, and drill holes in Mind where there exists the error of a cavity, and write

their glowing testimonials of the benefit which they derive from it. Doubtless the benefit is more or less real; but if the theory is right, how can any Christian Scientist be a dentist, and extract decayed molar errors, and fill up erroneous cavities? Indeed, if the theory is right, and the "Scientific Statement of Being" is the coming creed of men, just what can a man do? what can he buy or sell? in what shall he live and with what attire himself? and on what shall he stand or sit, there being no substance in matter, but only infinite Mind?

I have gone several times to see men of note who work cures by mental methods, and without religious claims. Some of these were charlatans, but others, as I believe, sincere and honest men, really helping a large proportion of the cases that come to them. I have seen canes and crutches discarded, surgical appliances laid aside, and in some cases the cures which physicians had failed to procure, apparently brought about.

Of one or two other experiences, I shall speak more at length, and shall indicate in the proper place some thought of mine concerning them. I believe that all of them can show a percentage of apparent cures.

If, therefore, I object to such terms as divine healing, it is not because I dispute the fact, but because I do not recognise the limitation which the name implies. Health is wholeness, logically and etymologically, and wholeness is holiness, and wholeness and holiness and health are from God. All healing is divine healing, though the means employed are often far from the divine ideal.

We are learning better than we once knew, that the mind has an intimate relation to the body, and an influence over its conditions. The relation of the physical and the spiritual is still shrouded in mystery, but some of the governing conditions of that relation are more clearly seen. That the prayer of faith can save the sick in many instances has been proved by a lengthening list of cases in these present days. At the same time, a multitude of systems which employ mental therapeutics, and which have a surprising success in a certain class or in classes of diseases, should be regarded as giving the doctrine of faith-cure a certain scientific basis. Nor need the believer in divine healing, so-called, regret to acknowledge that his cures can be duplicated by the so-called Christian Scientist, nor the Christian Scientist dispute that his cures can be paralleled by those who employ other methods of mental healing, some of them claiming no religious basis, and by others possessing a religious basis which does not command the respect of intelligence. These cures have equal scientific value, and I think I shall not be misunderstood if I add, equal religious value. For they all show how rational it is to expect physical benefit to result from a sound mental and spiritual condition; and that condition Christianity ought to furnish. Prayer and faith are curative agents of the first value, even as judged apart from supernatural influence; and I do not, by any means, limit the power of God in answer to prayer to those effects of which we are able to determine the natural causes.

Faith-healing is not a new thing in the Christian Church. Some once eminently respectable forms of it have obtained wide acceptance and have passed away as historic superstitions.

Down to the time of Queen Anne, the English prayer-book contained a form to be used when the king touched people afflicted with scrofula. "King's evil," the disease was called, from the current belief that the touch of a king would cure it. That the touch did not always heal is evidenced by the case of Dr. Samuel Johnson, who, as a child of three, was taken to London and touched by Queen Anne; that healing or improvement often followed the touch of the royal hand must be admitted by any one who realises how widespread was the belief in its efficacy. Charles II. touched as many as one hundred thousand afflicted persons. When William III. came to the throne, and refused to touch people who had scrofula, the Jacobites counted his refusal as proof that he was not a legitimate monarch, and so feared the test; parents of diseased children wept and protested against his heartlessness; and high churchmen denounced him a pagan or a Puritan. The proof that cures followed these touches is quite as convincing as that of any of our modern faith-cure claimants. Indeed, it soon was found that a king's right to the throne could not be determined by the efficacy of his touch, as a contemporary historian informs us, "Whether our kings were of York or Lancaster, they did cure for the most part."

## V. Roman Catholic Cures.

It would be very easy to multiply instances of cures wrought, or alleged to have been wrought, through Roman Catholic superstitions on this side the water. The evidence is of the same kind, and is fully as strong and consistent and reliable as that adduced to prove other faith-cures. For instance, here is a clipping from a New York paper, in which the circumstances of the cure and the inventory of the relics seem to imply a somewhat careful newspaper investigation:

"Michael B. McCarty has for some months been an object of wonder to medical men. He has been breathing at a rate of over one hundred and forty times per minute, and his efforts at respiration have been so violent that he has reminded those who heard him of a locomotive struggling up a heavy grade. The leading physicians of several cities tried to find out what was the matter with the man, but were utterly unable to explain his malady, or in any way to relieve it. A few days ago Michael said he could be cured if he could touch sacred relics. He called on Father Tom Adams, of Brooklyn, who was suspended by Bishop McLaughlin, for giving too much of his time to the curing of sick through the medium of certain relics in his possession.

"Father Adams stripped McCarty and rubbed him with relics of the Saviour and the saints. He told McCarty to have faith and he would be healed. McCarty believed, and his awful breathing quieted to the normal state. McCarty is absolutely cured of his terrible affliction. Doctors say that if he had shown as much will to get well under their hands as he did under the priest's

treatment, his recovery would have been as certain. They see nothing of the miraculous in this faith-cure.

"The following is a list of Father Adams's relics that are said to be miraculous in their power to heal the sick:

"Particles of flesh of St. Francis of Assisi.

"Particles of garments of St. Julia, the virgin martyr.

"Earth and coffin wood from the grave of St. Teresa, Alva, Spain.

"Particles from the coat of St. Joseph.

"A part of the coffin of St. Margaret Mary, of Alaquoque, France, the founder of the Order of Devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

"Particles from the urn of St. Aloysius Gonzaga.

"Particles from the grave of Virgin Mary.

"A small statuette of St. Teresa, made from the earth of her grave.

"Piece of stone from the tomb of Christ.

"Portion of the crib in which Christ was placed in the stable at Bethlehem.

"Part of garments worn by St. Alfonso Signara.

"Father Adams has what appears to be proofs of authenticity of these relics in documents yellow with age, signed by Roman cardinals and containing the papal seal. Father Adams cites Holy Writ as his authority for the use of relics."

Another clipping may be reprinted here, this one from the Catholic *Republic* of Boston. It is worth reading because of the number and variety of cures it records.

"A despatch from Ottawa, Ont., dated July 22d, says, An additional number of miraculous cures are reported as having taken place at the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré in connection with a pilgrimage recently organised by Abbé Lesage. The first case is that of Miss Hogue, a young French-Canadian lady, who was so weak and crippled that it was with difficulty that she could walk with crutches. She accompanied the pilgrimage to St. Anne, and, while partaking of communion, she suddenly felt her

strength return, and she threw away her crutches. The second case was that of Marie Louise Larin, a French-Canadian woman, thirty-three years old, who was for twelve years paralysed so that she was not able to leave her room. So bad was she that she received the last rites of the Church shortly before the pilgrimage. When the latter started out she was carried on board the steamer *Three Rivers* in an easy chair. She could move neither head nor foot, and was in a dying condition. On the arrival of the pilgrimage at St. Anne she was carried into the sanctuary, where the holy communion was administered to her. All at once she arose, refused the proffered aid of her friends, and walked through the church with a firm step, to the wonder of the pilgrims, who cried out at the remarkable miracle. To-day she is in perfect health. 'At the communion,' she said, 'it seemed to me that the good St. Anne looked at me, and said: "Walk, Louise Larin."' A girl of fourteen years, who was afflicted with blindness, the result of a severe attack of smallpox, was cured at the same time. Madam Periault, of Île Perrot, near Montreal, who was afflicted with lameness, and had one leg two inches shorter than the other, had the limb perfectly restored."

Any Protestant who cares to inform himself will find the number of these Roman Catholic shrines considerable, and while they flourish best where people read and think less than in America, they are not lacking here. The *Congregationalist* of April 5, 1901, calls attention to two such shrines in Boston.

"Attention has lately been called to the existence of two shrines in Boston, to which multitudes of Roman Catholics are constantly resorting, seeking to be cured of sickness and other ills to which flesh is heir. One is in the church of St. Leonard of Port Morris, supported by the Franciscan Fathers on Prince Street, in the North End, where every Tuesday afternoon special prayers are said to St. Anthony, before whose statue many miraculous cures are affirmed to take place. Although the church is usually at-

tended by Italians to the exclusion of others, these weekly adorations of St. Anthony bring crowds of English-speaking Catholics from all parts of the city and its suburbs, so that the English language, spoken with a strong Italian accent, is used by Father Ubaldus in his service on those occasions.

"Of still greater repute is the shrine of Our Lady of the Perpetual Help, in the Redemptorist Church in Roxbury, where a monumental pile of discarded crutches bears witness to the cures there accomplished. A painting of the Virgin, said to be of thirteenth century origin, represents the worker of these wonders, whose aid is sought by believers flocking hither from all over New England and points even more remote."

It further appears that relics in the hands of a devout Roman Catholic can serve uses which a Protestant can hardly expect to parallel. The *Outlook* of April 5, 1901, shows how in Montreal relics that are good for the cure of disease may be used also to suppress a fire. The captain of Montreal's fire company, No. 14, evidently believes in the value of such relics. Doubtless they gave him and his Roman Catholic firemen and the people who assisted them courage for better service, and hence may deserve classification under the general head of faith-cures, for few even of the most ardent faith-curists will acknowledge the value of such a use of curative agents apart from their effect on the minds of those who use them.

"A Canadian correspondent sends us clippings from the Montreal *Herald* about a curious incident connected with a recent fire in that city. The *Herald* first quoted its story from *La Patrie*, a French paper, which related the miraculous occurrence with gravity and sincerity (but, as it turns out, quite inaccurately), under the head 'Supernatural Protection.' The fire in question

was in buildings near to Notre Dame Church, and fears arose lest the sacred edifice itself should be destroyed. The exact facts the *Herald* found, after investigation, were as follows:

"The Sisters of the Congregation, 40 St. Jean Baptiste, saw the fire, and retired to the little chapel to pray for the safety of the district. A relic of Ste. Amable, consisting of a ribbon the saint had worn, was hung upon the wall by the altar. Ste. Amable has for centuries been looked upon as the protectress in heaven against fire. When large districts have been menaced by a conflagration, prayers have been said to Ste. Amable, and her assistance asked in staying the progress of the flames. With greater confidence, therefore, the sister superior took a small piece of the holy ribbon, which had been given the sisters by Mgr. Bruchesi, and, giving it to a messenger, told him to deliver it to a fireman and have it thrown into the flames. The messenger took the relic and hurried on his mission, while the nuns continued to pray before the altar. The relic was given to Captain Renaud, of No. 14 Station, who, with great reverence and confidence, climbed to the top of a ladder and deposited it in the flames raging in the top story of the Hudon Hebert & Company's building. The nuns this morning told a *Herald* reporter that many fires had been stopped through prayers to Ste. Amable. They believed that on Saturday the flames were extinguished very easily after the relic was deposited in the burning building. Captain Renaud said, when asked about the circumstance: 'Everybody has his own opinion in matters of this kind.' 'Do you believe the relic had any effect on the flames?' 'Yes, I think the fire went out almost immediately afterward.'"

Among the multitudes of miracles alleged to have been wrought at Roman Catholic shrines, those of Our Lady of Lourdes stand prominent, and are of the present time. Lourdes, in the south of France, has a grotto where, in 1858, a peasant girl believed herself to see the Virgin Mary. From that time on such wonderful cures occurred in this place that a large church was

built there in 1876, and consecrated in the presence of thirty-five cardinals and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries. To this place pilgrims throng by scores of thousands, and the water from the grotto is sold in great quantities. That very many people are healed is unquestionable, and the list of cures is remarkable. While the diseases most frequently cured are those affected in marked degree by the nervous system, the variety is great. Running ulcers, paralysed hands, drawn-up limbs, and a half-destroyed eye are among the alleged recoveries. These cures are attested by quite as good evidence as that which is adduced in favour of any of our Protestant systems of mental or spiritual healing.

## VI. A Protestant's Explanation.

Cases such as these, with cures so undeniable, afford a hard problem for the Protestant who has a system of his own to defend, and believes it essentially different from this of the Catholics. Rev. A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian Alliance, has undertaken to explain it, and in these words:

"Where there is a simple and genuine faith in a Romanist, — and we have found it in some, — God will honour it as well as in a Protestant. . . . But when, on the other hand, they are corrupted by the errors of their Church, and exercising faith, not in God, but in the relics of superstition, or the image of the Virgin, we see no difference between the Romanist and the Spiritualist, and we should not wonder at all if the devil should be permitted to work his lying wonders for them, as he does for the superstitious pagan or possessed medium."

Doctor Simpson's distinction will not stand as a scientific explanation. Here are two Catholics, both more or less religious, both with enough of superstition to come to the grotto at Lourdes, and one with a little superstition to spare. The faith of one is in God rather than in the alleged revelation of the Virgin, though of course he also believes in that; the other believes in this revelation, and beyond that point allows the Church to do his thinking. The difference in the two men's faith is a difference of proportion. Each

"has a simple and genuine faith," and each is affected, though in varying degrees, by "the errors of their Church." Both bow at the same altar; both offer the same prayers; both partake of the same water; both go away healed of the same disease, and leave their crutches on the same pile. But if Doctor Simpson is right, God heals one and the devil the other. Some broader line of demarcation between the work of God and the work of the devil is needed for men at large. The apostles knew no such fine-spun distinctions. No system of faith-cure can permanently command belief in its superior excellence which acknowledges so close an approach to the work of Satan. The Son of God was manifest that he might destroy the works of the devil, not that he might establish a division of labour for the effecting of ends practically identical.

I quite dissent from the foregoing theory. All healing is from God. We cannot be safe in assigning alternately to God and the devil results that any reasonable classification must account similar. If "the superstitious pagan, the possessed medium, and the Romanist, corrupted by the errors of his Church," cast out devils by Beelzebub, and Doctor Simpson does the same by the finger of God, Satan is divided against himself, and our ability to know a tree by its fruits is at an end.

## VII. A Test Case.

Some years ago I attended a large gathering of a devout body of good people, led by men whose names are familiar to Christians generally throughout the country. At this meeting a goodly number of people were prayed over and dismissed as healed. If I had any doubts about their cure, I should certainly have kept them to myself had not those in charge of the meeting repeatedly challenged any Christians present who did not accept the cures and the doctrines which accompanied them to rise and say so, or remain convicted of doubting the power of Christ as thus manifested. Thus challenged, I rose, and addressed the minister in charge, who was prompted from time to time by two eminent exponents of divine healing with him in the pulpit. I asked this question:

"What limit do you assign to your own power to work cures?"

"Oh, brother," was the reply, "your question shows utter inability to understand our position! We work no cures. We are nothing, less than nothing! It is the Lord Jesus Christ who heals men."

I answered, "What limit, then, do you assign to the power of Christ to work cures through your ministry?"

"We assign no limit," was the reply. "All power

is his, in heaven and on earth. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

"Then why," I asked, "are your cures the same in kind as those of Christian Scientists, Mormons, Spiritualists, mental healers, and the rest? Does Christ work through these people?"

"No, brother. And that shows how short-sighted the Church is to-day. It doesn't believe that God has as much power as the devil."

"You mean that while Christ works cures through you, the devil works the same kind of cures through these others?"

"Certainly. Don't you remember, when Moses cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent, the magicians did the same with their enchantments?"

"I do," said I, "and if I remember correctly, the serpent of Moses swallowed the serpent of the magicians. If, among all these forms of healing, yours alone is from God, I should like to see a larger serpent."

"What do you propose, brother? You have seen these people healed; what more can you ask?"

"I have seen these people who profess to be healed," said I, "but I do not know how sick some of them were before, nor how well the rest are now. And I have seen people who gave like evidence of being healed, whose recovery, such as it was, came by those whom you say are helped by the devil. I should like to propose a larger serpent. Among your members here is a minister, faithful and devout, who lost a leg in the Civil War. If I lack faith, he does not; you know him

and I know him as a true Christian man, and one in sympathy with your views. Every day while this meeting has been in progress, he has stumped up and down these aisles on a wooden leg. He is here now. I propose that you pray for the restoration of his lost leg."

One of the seated brethren replied, "We have no record that our Lord ever restored a lost leg."

I answered, "Our Lord probably never saw a man who had lost a leg; He lived before the day of cannon-balls and threshing-machines and modern surgery. Do you doubt that He could have done it? Do you doubt that he would have done it? If you wish to distinguish between his work and that of the devil, what better opportunity could you ask?"

But they declined to pray for my friend, who still wears his wooden leg into the pulpit. Instead, they referred me to the case of a man who had been healed that afternoon of cancer of the stomach. The man went home and died that night of hemorrhage induced by the excitement attending his cure.

Of the three men on the platform that afternoon, two are more prominent than ever in work of that kind. I was in the city where the third resides some time ago, and was informed that he had become a Spiritualist medium, and as such is said to be working the same kind of cures, but these, though externally the same, must now, according to his former theory, be wrought by the devil.

## VIII. Other Forms of Mental Cure.

The many forms of faith-healing or of mental-healing now practised by people of some intelligence insist strongly upon being known, each as different from the rest. There are marked differences between them, some making no religious claims whatever, some demanding faith in a particular person, and some seeking to effect a cure by an elevation of thought and uplift of soul which may prepare for a divine blessing. Yet he would be a careless and superficial observer who did not discern more points in common in the objective results than there are differences in the definitions and forms of expression on the part of the different systems. And, not only are these cures much alike, but many of them can be parallelled by authentic instances of bodily relief resulting from strong and wholly unpremeditated mental stimulus.

How many and how interesting are the cases of sudden recovery from sickness. I know a lady who teaches in a boarding-school, far from her home. Some years ago she lay in bed with rheumatism, unable to move. One night the dormitory caught fire. This helpless woman, who is no hysterical pretender, rose to the occasion. She rushed from room to room getting the girls out of danger. She threw her belongings into her trunk, and bumped it down the stairs. She lifted one

end of it into a wagon, and sat on it while driven to a farmhouse, where, after seeing the rest in bed, she herself went sound asleep, and, in the excitement of the hour and her thought for others, never remembered until next morning that she had been sick when the fire broke out. When I saw her last she informed me that she has never had a twinge of rheumatism since that night.

The extent to which the mind can influence the body, especially when the influence is attended by religious excitement, is manifested in the ancient oriental custom of fire-walking, whose origin is lost in antiquity, but which is still practised in India, Japan, and some of the South Sea islands. The performance consists in walking barefoot over white-hot stones. Religious incantations usually precede, and a feast follows this singular and well-authenticated custom. Dr. H. M. Hocken, who himself witnessed it, thus describes the ceremony as it occurred on one of the Fiji Islands:

"Through the coöperation of civil officers and a steamship company, the small clan on the island was persuaded to give an exhibition, and several whites, including Doctor Hocken, went to witness it. One of them, a government meteorologist, carried a thermometer which would register up to four hundred degrees Fahrenheit.

"When the guests arrived they found hundreds of natives assembled. The oven was twenty-five or thirty feet long and eight feet broad, and was shaped like a saucer. The deepest part of the depression was fifteen feet in length. The preparations had been undertaken long enough in advance to avert any delay, and the visitors saw the stones still covered with embers, which were removed in their presence by means of long poles bearing loops of green withes.

"Walking beside the pit before this was done, the man with the thermometer recorded a temperature of one hundred and fourteen degrees. After the stones were uncovered he hung his instrument out over the centre of the oven, six feet above the stones, whereupon the mercury rose to two hundred and eighty-two degrees. The solder was melting, and the instrument was likely to be ruined if left in that position longer.

"What the temperature was on the stones themselves can only be conjectured. Doctor Hocken says that they were 'white-hot,' and that low flames from small coals between the stones could be seen leaping up around them.

"Two of the men who were to walk across the oven were examined by Doctor Hocken before their daring act. They wore garlands about the neck and waist. Their feet and legs were entirely bare. The soles were soft and flexible, showing that they had not been rendered permanently callous in any way.

"In order to detect the presence of chemicals which might have been applied for the occasion, Doctor Hocken did not hesitate to lick the natives' feet. But his scientific zeal availed nothing.

"Finally, at a signal, the seven or eight natives who took part in the exhibition came down in single file to the oven, and walked across the stones from one end to the other of the pit. They spent less than half a minute there.

"Immediately after they emerged, Doctor Hocken again inspected their feet, but could find no sign of burning or blistering.

"Several Englishmen have tried this experiment, one of them a British resident on one of the Society Islands. He says, 'I felt something resembling slight electric shocks, and the tingling sensations continued for hours afterward, but that was all. The tender skin of my feet was not even hardened by fire.'

"Yet the stones were so hot that an hour afterward green branches thrown on them caught fire and blazed up.

"It is difficult to explain these phenomena. No theory worthy of scientific consideration has yet been proposed to account for them."

The possible influence of a religious idea, even though superstitious, upon popular thought, especially in time

of popular excitement, finds illustration in an apparently authentic incident reported in the missionary papers a few years ago from Burmah.

"A lady missionary, finding that the cholera was raging in a village which she visited, distributed a number of bottles of an anodyne among the people as a remedy. Returning some time after, she was assured that her treatment had done them so much good that they had accepted her God. She followed them with joy to their house of worship, where she found her medicine bottles set in order on a shelf, and the whole company prostrated themselves before them. The reasoning which had brought about their conversion was not so very different from an argument too commonly urged in Christian lands under the name of divine healing."

## IX. Absent Treatment.

It has developed in these recent days, that where faith is sufficient, distance is no bar to cure, and this fact has opened a very profitable system of "absent treatment," by which long-distance healing is wrought through money-orders sent in one direction by mail, and health vibrations of one sort or another are sent in the other direction at the convenience of the healer, who has been known to send a bill that ran into three figures to the estate of a person who, nevertheless, died. It appears to average about as well as the other forms of healing, and is proving of value in other directions as well. The ease with which the principles of absent treatment can be administered to a variety of cases is illustrated in a paper before me, one of whose adjuncts provides for the procuring of success in business, through mental impulse, sent out freely for a dollar. Here is the standing notice at the head of this department:

"TREATMENT FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS ONLY.

"Daily I speak for each member of this Circle the Word of success. Any man or woman is eligible for membership who is engaged in business, or desires to be. Any woman who is a helpmeet to husband or son is partner in business and may join the Success Circle, either with or without the other's knowledge, and receive its benefits for both. One year's treatment and

the paper for a year for one dollar. For obtaining quickest and best results, read daily, night and morning, the monthly letter to the Success Circle, printed herewith. No special hour for receiving the Word is necessary. It is with each member, and works night and day, feeling or no feeling, until it manifests that for which it is spoken."

One reads on with some interest to find the "monthly letter," thus to be read morning and night as a sort of devotional service for revenue. The letter for March, 1901, which is to supply this sort of semi-diurnal spiritual stimulus for success in business for thirty-one days reads as follows:

"Bless your heart, dearie, you are doing better than I even hoped! Glory, hallelujah! That's the ticket. Just you go in to WIN and *keep at it* and all you desire will grow for you. Never mind ups and downs — never mind other people's ups and downs. Let nothing draw off your stream of thought force from the things you are aiming for. Keep cool, keep sweet, and AIM. Get interested in aiming. Steady now, steady. Your nebulous desires are forming in answer to the Word — the Word is moving upon the face of the deeps of you and order is coming out of chaos. Your mind is quieting, steadying; plans are condensing; *force is condensing.* LET the Word work. Keep sweet. *Never mind* ups and downs — ALL things will work for the furtherance of your desires. Daily I speak for you the Word which grows for you all you desire, *and grows desire too.*"

Some people are getting their dollar's worth, apparently, out of this sort of thing. One woman, the daughter of a noted inventor, and wife of a prominent ex-minister, whose name is given unblushingly at the end of her printed letter, sends the following, which the editor, a woman, felt free to publish. I omit the name

of paper, book, and writer, and I do not know that I care to comment on the letter, or the sort of *quasi* spiritual pabulum that evoked it:

"DEAR ———: Here's a great hug and kiss for you, to emphasise my thanks for the Success Circle. The week after I joined I felt the result of your spoken Word. You vital, sweet woman! From the first issue of your paper I have loved you. . . . I have read your book, and consider it a remarkable book. The author sees far and clear; the truth and power of many of his observations made my consciousness leap! . . . You say each thing that happens is *calling out* our forces into expression. My Goodness, how true that is! Your faculty for saying just the right thing is astonishing. Not one stiff, automatic, meaningless idea ever fell from your pen. When Oliver Wendell Holmes said 'Nature is in earnest when she makes a woman,' he must have meant you. I wish I could tell you how I keenly appreciate you. I fairly *eat up* each number of your paper. Sometimes I sympathise with Charles Lamb. He was riding home from a dinner-party and said he could not 'fully' express what a good time he had had, unless he hung his legs out the cab window. As I never ride home in cabs, I shall send you my picture by way of substitute. Continue the Word. Some day you shall be proud of your work."

## X. The Resemblances and Differences in These Systems.

Does it follow, then, that there is no difference between these various methods of faith cure? By no means. The difference is vast, so vast that some of them are utterly impossible to an intelligent and reverent man. The difference between the cures which result from superstitions and those which result from faith, are twofold, subjective and objective. The subjective difference is, that the higher the object toward whom faith is exercised, the more exalted will be their faith. The objective difference is, that God is able to work for men, both mentally and physically, not in proportion to His own power alone, but in proportion to the intelligence, sincerity, open-heartedness, and spiritual elevation of the believer.

It is a pity that Christian people, when sick, avail themselves so little of the physical and spiritual benefits of prayer. In too many Christian homes there is no definite prayer for recovery in cases of serious illness. If the pastor of a church be a wise and truly spiritual man, his prayer of faith will have a real curative power. Let a strong, courageous, pious, sympathetic, Christian minister enter a sick-room and offer a prayer in faith, not that God will evacuate His omniscience at our demand, but that He will hear and answer according to

His wisdom, a prayer both confident and submissive, and hope and healing and comfort are nearer for the prayer. It is time for people who believe the gospel to make larger their faith in prayer as a help in healing the sick. The faith that cures the body will be doubly precious when it proceeds from, and strengthens, a work of grace in the soul.

We can afford to be patient with all systems of healing in which the cure, or attempt at cure, proceeds from healthy mental and spiritual conditions, even though we grow righteously indignant with the high-sounding but empty philosophy of one form, the cant and pious blasphemy of another, and the well-paid fraud and extortion and charlatanry of a third. All of them, beneath their various admixtures of truth and error, contain the germ of a real spiritual benefit, available for all Christians.

## XI. The Discount on the Cures.

I have conceded that many of the cures alleged to have been wrought by healers of different sorts are genuine. I have no desire to deny any of them. I could rather wish that all were true. Yet perhaps nowhere has there been more pious lying than concerning these very cures. Their capacity for exaggeration is almost unlimited, and they gain their first credence among those most willing, sometimes painfully eager, to discern and acknowledge a benefit. In multitudes of cases the announcement of a cure has been premature, and the correction has not followed the original report with equal swiftness. That some of the published cures are followed by unpublished relapses any person of extended observation can testify. Dr. A. J. Gordon published in his "Ministry of Healing" an incident which comes up for scientific consideration in *The Medical Record* for March 27, 1886, showing out of how small a fragment of truth was made the account of an alleged cure of a fracture by the noted Doctor Cullis. As apparently proving the healing of a broken bone by faith, it was eagerly seized upon and widely published, of course in good faith. But advocates of faith cure extend their work by the publication, not of their failures, but of their successes, and these, even in the best of cases, lose little in the telling, and generally shrink to very modest proportions under any careful investigation.

## XII. The Dangers of These Delusions.

We cannot afford to forget the positive harm which these systems do in the hands of their overzealous advocates. That those who trust themselves to these various "healers" sometimes die of curable diseases is not the worst thing to be said against them; these give their lives voluntarily into the hands of the "healers" and assume their own risks. Sorry as we may be for the deluded, we may recognise our inability to prevent some forms of suicide by well-intentioned persons. But this is not the worst of it. Parents who believe in these delusions are torn asunder in their love for little children, doubting whether to give them proper aid in sickness is to distrust God; contagious diseases are disregarded, denied, and spread; and death-beds of good old saints, as I have myself witnessed, are tortured by fanatics who implore the dying one to believe and be healed, and who cast upon his dying mind the anxious burden of doubt whether indeed he might not recover but for the sin of his inability to rise.

Let me cite an instance. A poor woman lay dying of cancer, which was fast eating out a vital organ. Her physicians, reputable men, informed her that she was past human help, and that an operation could only bring added pain and no relief. A series of good

physicians, the last two of whom I knew, did what they could to make her last weeks comfortable; they could do no more. She was a Christian, but the wife of an easy-going drunkard; and the future of her children, to whom she had been both father and mother, brought sad forebodings and strong desires for life. Hearing of a specialist who was said to be performing wonderful cures, she made great sacrifices to secure money to call him for a single visit. I thought the man a fraud, but even he was honest enough to assure her that she was past help. What was there for her to do but to seek to quiet her spirit in the few days of life that remained for her, and to commit her own overworked soul, and the future of her children, to God? This she would have done, but there came certain Job's comforters, the same calling themselves holiness women. Over against the wisdom of the physicians they placed their own unbounded ignorance, and called it faith. "You shall not die if you believe," they told her; "the prayer of faith can save you." I fancy some will say that at least they could do her no harm; that hers was quite a legitimate case for them to approach. But it did harm. They tortured that poor woman in her last hours with the conviction that only her own unbelief made recovery impossible. They told her that faith such as she ought to have would restore her to her children. They set her to examining her motives and searching her soul and straining her will to attain a faith which would enable her to live for her children's sake. All the self-reproach

of failing to do her duty toward her little ones she felt in their implications. Thus were her last hours made hours of agony, the pain of the cancer exceeded by the anguish of her attempt to join with them in what they called "the prayer of faith." Does not a single instance such as this show how far removed are such theories from the category of harmless delusions?

If the discovery of the power of God to work miracles through one's own ministration be really made, it ought to carry with it some growth in spiritual grace. Unfortunately, it sometimes is accompanied by a censorious spirit toward those who do not claim like faith and power.

One morning I went to the door in answer to a ring, and there stood a man, rather ill-favoured, with a Bible under his arm. "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" he demanded.

"I have," said I.

He opened his Bible and read, "'These signs shall follow them that believe . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' Have you received that power?" he demanded.

"Not to my knowledge," said I. "Have you?"

"Yes, I have," said he. "I have seen wonderful things, done wonderful things. I have seen things which I should not have believed if I had not seen them. I've come to testify of them to you."

"Don't," said I. "I shall not believe them."

"Do you mean to call me a liar?" he cried.

"No. You tell me you would not have believed

these things if I had told them to you; I certainly have no more confidence in your word than you in mine. If they were too wonderful for you to believe without seeing, I must see them. You need not tell them to me."

He was a good deal disturbed, and showed some loss of temper. "You don't want to believe!" he cried. "You have hardened your heart against the truth! You are a blind leader of the blind! Test the Lord! Investigate, as I have done, and you will believe!"

"I am ready to test the matter," said I. "Let me take your Bible; you did not read the whole passage. Do all the powers there described go together?"

"They do," said he. "Whoever has received the Holy Ghost has them all."

I read, "'These signs shall follow them that believe, . . . if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.' Now, sir, I have in the house corrosive sublimate and Rough on Rats. Will you take a dose now, or return for it after awhile?"

We parted quite abruptly, and as yet he has not returned, and I am without the evidence which he came to give me that his is the one and only truly divine method of healing men without medicine.

I knew a man some years ago, who recently was taken sick and sent for his pastor, requesting him to bring the elders of the church, and pray over him, anointing him with oil. His pastor, a noble Christian gentleman, declined, saying, "I will come and pray, but if I use oil I shall want to use more than you

desire, and I prefer to bring with me some Christian physician who knows better than I what oil to use, and how to use it. However, there is one officer of the church who agrees with you. I will come with him, and will pray, and he may anoint you according to your belief and method. But I recommend that, beside praying, you call a good physician."

This did not satisfy the man, who thought, and wrongly, that his minister was lacking in spirituality. So he called a group of those who believed as he did, and they anointed him and prayed, and he died. It is not for me to say that their prayers did no good, but I am able to say on the authority of the board of health, who have shut up the house as at present unfit for human habitation, that they would have assisted his recovery more if, beside their praying, they had seen to the digging of a new cellar drain.

## XIII. The Healing of True Faith.

If by answering our prayers God intended to do what we think we want, we should never dare to pray. These bodies of ours are not constructed for immortality, nor is this world God's best. Every man and woman of us, save the few who are to live till life becomes a burden, and those to be overtaken by sudden death, will one day face death with longings for life, and prayers that God will raise us up. We ought so to pray. We have no right to want to die while we are able to live and help the world. We shall pray to live, and in so praying we shall do our duty. But in God's good time, He will hear that prayer, and will answer it by taking us to the life everlasting and to larger service.

Pitiful is the condition which I have seen now and again of good people who have prayed for the restoration to health of a dear one, and have seen him die, slipping away from the arms that clung to him so frantically, and the heart-broken parent, dazed with grief and the surprise, has said, "I shall never believe in prayer again!" Poor heart-broken parent, thy faith should have been in God, not in thy prayer! Learn now this one lesson, writ large that thou mayest read it even through thy tears, that prayer is not to the end

that God may share our unwisdom, but rather that we may see things as God sees them.

Let no man say, "I have prayed the prayer of faith, therefore shall my loved one recover." You have prayed the prayer of faith, and it shall not go unanswered, but the answer to your prayer may come in strength to bear an impending sorrow. Paul prayed the prayer of faith, and his infirmity remained, but the grace of God in him abounded the more. Jesus prayed the prayer of faith, but He drank the bitter cup to its dregs. The servant is not above his Master; it is enough that he be as his Lord.

There is no word in all Scripture that encourages us to make our faith or prayer a substitute for the use of such means as God has revealed for the answering of our prayers. A man may say that he has faith in God, and then freeze between his stove and a full coal-hod. God will let him freeze, no matter how sincere his faith, unless he uses his own muscles for the placing of coal upon the fire. Now, the use of coal was no part of God's original revelation to man in Eden; it had to be learned after thousands of men had frozen to death above unsunken coal-mines. The discovery that coal will burn, and, burning, will keep men from freezing, is as truly from God, and is surrounded by as imperative sanctions, as if it were part of Holy Writ. The man who treats that discovery as of little importance, because it is not in the Bible, will be allowed to freeze to death just as certainly as if the truth of the properties of the coal were written on every page of

the Bible, nor will the prayers of a million misguided men, offered in his behalf, raise the thermometer one degree. In like manner men have made discoveries, as that a certain remedy assists nature's restorative processes in a given disease, and that another destroys the disease-germs that impede the work of nature. These discoveries lay on men the obligation to accept the truth, and pray henceforth only as they avail themselves of what God has revealed, and men will die if they ignore them, even though they pray in faith.

What, then, is the truth underlying these various systems, and what is the Biblical and sensible doctrine of faith cure? It is possible that we cannot spell out in full the words of the divine message, but its essential meaning we may gather.

The truth is that the mind has a most potent influence upon the body, an influence whose limits are as yet unknown. An act of faith in anything believed to be good and powerful will influence both mind and body for good, whether the object of faith be real or fancied, good or evil. To the enlightened mind, faith in a degraded object becomes impossible; it must be, if at all, in God or in some object believed to be good. Just in proportion to the intensity and serenity of the faith, and the perceived goodness and power of the God toward whom faith is exercised, will be the subjective blessing. This in itself is not small, and this is the first and fundamental answer to prayer. But God, whose power is great beyond our thought, becomes able in ways that we may not wholly fathom, to bless

the hearts and minds of those who trust in Him. Out of this spiritual blessing flow blessings innumerable to body as well as brain. And while the blessing is not withheld from those who in their mental darkness mingle superstition with their worship, or even from those who substitute superstition for faith, the blessing, one in kind, is communicated in larger fulness to those whose faith is intelligent and heartfelt, and is exercised toward God alone. All health is from God. All health-giving processes, however obscured and obstructed by our ignorance and folly and superstition, are from God. Religions may help or hinder, but they cannot wholly thwart His mercy. Physicians may promote or impede, but they cannot wholly destroy the life-giving and life-sustaining and life-repairing processes of His universe. Superstitions by their fragment of the truth may assist more darkened minds, or by their admixture of error may make deeper the darkness, but they cannot wholly obliterate the light of His truth, which gives some elements of true faith to superstitions otherwise sad and degrading. Whatever makes for holiness, for wholeness, for health of body or soul, is from God.

There is more divine healing than at first we recognise as such. All healing is divine. We wrongly restrict the meaning when we apply it only to those cures which proceed from immediate religious influence. Every cure is an answer to prayer, prayer that in many cases has been wrung from the heart of sobbing centuries, and whose answer is revealed in some new method of saving life.

Let me suppose two cases of men equally sick, and both beyond present human help. In the one case Christian men, uniting their prayers and faith, surround the bed, and pray for recovery, and recovery comes. They do not see that human means have availed, save those consequent upon prayer. Let them be thankful, and believe that their prayer has been answered. Still the case remains an isolated one, remarkable, and accounted divine just because it is unusual. In the other case, after centuries of effort and pain, and the unwearied toil of generations of physicians, some of whom prayed and some of whom did not, a remedy is found, which saves that man's life not only, but remains a permanent addition to human knowledge, a truth whose benefits are to accrue to all generations. Perhaps the last man who made the discovery did not pray at all; perhaps the first man saved had no faith in prayer. Nevertheless, I say that if one and only one of those cases is to be accounted divine healing, the one better deserves the name which represents the discovery of a permanent divine truth. I do not choose between them. I count them both divine, but if I had to choose the one or the other, I should choose the one which stands for the larger human gain, the one which has come as the result of both prayer and effort, and which abides as the answer to a thousand prayers yet to be offered.

Through the skill and the blunders of the physicians, through the prayers and the toil of friends, through the heart-breaking disappointments and the glad rejoicings,

we are learning better God's way of restoring health. This is from God.

Through much pain and great needless suffering, we are coming to a better knowledge of the laws by which health may be maintained. Cures are from God, but much more so that soundness of health, that wholeness of body, which needs no healing.

The average of human life grows steadily.[1] The thoughts and purposes of men grow large. So moves the world toward its larger and better future, and God lives more in the life of men. This is the source of health, of wholeness, of holiness, and these all are from the same root. Trusting in Him, we shall find strength for life's inevitable sorrows. Trusting in Him, we shall find strength sufficient for sickness and for health, for life and for death, for earth and for heaven ; and through that trust we shall find health and wholeness for our bodies and our spirits, which are His.

This theory may not satisfy those who crave the supernatural, and who look for signs and wonders, nor is it likely to be acceptable to those who acknowledge no processes above those which they too narrowly call natural. But both these two classes have something to learn, and each may learn it from the other. The natural world is God's world. The earth as God made it, with its present physical and psychical laws, is good. He who postulates a Creator only that he may find a First Cause, and whose theory would be satisfied in prov-

[1] Professor Dolbear affirms that the average length of human life was thirty in 1800, and is forty in 1901.

ing that God once was, must learn that God is, and that His methods are discernible in some places where we have been unaccustomed to look for them. But the spiritual world, also, is real, and the things which are not seen are the eternal things. Generation by generation we shall learn better the relation of the material to the spiritual. We cannot afford in our half discovery of natural laws to create any philosophy of life that rules our God, or limits unduly the methods by which men become workers with Him. Already we know in part, and he is rash who affirms exhaustive knowledge of any one of God's methods. When we have uttered our last word of wisdom, we shall leave quite enough for the future to discover, and something for it to correct. And when human wisdom shall have made its final discovery of the divine method, it may be more ready than now to exclaim with Job:

> "Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways,
> And how small a whisper do we hear of Him!
> But the thunder of His power, who can understand?"
> (Job xxvi. 14, R. V.)

THE END.

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